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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, the fountain of truth and wisdom, thank You for the yearning You have placed in our hearts for peace on Earth to those with whom You are pleased.

Today, equip our Senators for the task before them. Help them strive to make the rough places of our Nation and world smooth and the crooked places straight.

Lord, give them the wisdom to be guided by conscience and not contention. Empower them to disagree without being disagreeable. May they never swerve from the straight and narrow path of Your prevailing providence.

We pray in the Name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 20, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of R. Russell Rumbaugh, of Nebraska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I have good news. With days left before Christmas, Democrats and Republicans have reached an omnibus agreement, completed at 1:15 a.m. early this morning.

In the very early hours of the morning, Chairman LEAHY and Ranking Member SHELBY released a long-sought, bipartisan, bicameral Omnibus appropriations bill for fiscal year 2023.

The omnibus is the last thing we have to do to close out a very success-

ful 117th Congress, and we have taken another step—a major step—towards reaching the goal line.

After a lot of hard work, this package represents an aggressive investment in American families, American workers, and America's national defense. It will give our troops a raise, make healthcare more affordable for millions, and it fulfills the promise Democrats made to defend democracy at home and abroad through the ECA.

It was no easy feat to piece this bill together, and if our amazing appropriator staff needs a quick power nap at their desks this morning, no one is going to blame them.

I want to thank Chairman LEAHY and Ranking Member SHELBY for working on this omnibus for months without cease. I can't think of a more fitting sendoff for our two esteemed appropriators than this. If this omnibus goes down as Senators LEAHY and SHELBY's final legislative contribution as Senators, then I say bravo, thank you, and well done.

I also want to thank my colleagues in the House—above all, Speaker PELOSI and Chair DELAUNO for their relentless work.

The clock is now ticking until government funding runs out this Friday. Between now and the end of the week, the watchwords for the Senate will be "speed" and "cooperation."

For the information of Senators, we are going to get going on this process today. Members should be ready to vote to lay the omnibus before the Senate as soon as this afternoon. We must finish passing this omnibus before the deadline on Friday, when government funding runs out, but we hope to do it much sooner than that because we are mindful that a nor'easter is barreling down the east coast on Thursday and Friday.

Let me say this again. The sooner we pass the omnibus, the better. We have until Friday before funding runs out, but we ought to get it done well before then.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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I hope no Senator will stand in the way of our finishing our work. We cannot afford a shutdown. More importantly, the American people need us to act quickly. As I said, the American people need us to act quickly to avert the looming danger of a government shutdown. Nobody wants a shutdown. Nobody benefits from a shutdown. So I hope nobody here will stand in the way of funding the government ASAP.

Now let's turn to the omnibus itself. This funding bill is overflowing with very good news for our troops, for the Ukrainian brave fighters, for American jobs, for our families, and for American democracy.

After a lot of hard work, Democrats will fulfill our promise to pass reforms to the Electoral Count Act into law. Two years after January 6, the attack on our Capitol remains an indelible stain on our democracy, and updating the Electoral Count Act is one of the ways we can prevent another January 6 in the future. It is so important to do.

I want to thank Senators MANCHIN and COLLINS and the group they put together to put the ECA together and Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUNT on the Rules Committee for their help in making this happen.

I said months ago we would do everything possible to pass ECA reform, and now we are following through. Many thanks, of course, go to all my colleagues who made this possible.

The omnibus is also going to fulfill our promise to stand with our friends in Ukraine with billions more in emergency economic and military aid. The bitterness of winter has descended on Eastern Europe, and if our friends in Ukraine hope to triumph over Russia, America must stand firmly on the side of our democratic friends abroad. They are not asking for, nor do they want American troops, but they do need the weaponry to defend themselves against a brutal Putin.

On the homefront, the omnibus will make healthcare more affordable and more expansive for millions upon millions of Americans. For the first time ever, every child in America who qualifies for Medicaid or CHIP will now be guaranteed at least one year of continuous health coverage. This is a major change that will make a big difference in improving healthcare for millions of kids.

We will permanently extend a policy from the American Rescue Plan that let States give a full year of postpartum coverage for mothers on Medicaid and CHIP. This is something huge, something I have so strongly believed in and fought for. It is a major step to address America's crisis in maternal health and mortality.

Many elements of the Momnibus are in this bill, good elements of the Momnibus, particularly for women of color, who have long been discriminated against when it comes to birth and postpartum coverage.

The omnibus also represents a new offensive in the battle against Amer-

ica's mental health crisis. We all know that crisis is at record levels. We all know we have to do something about it. This omnibus does. Overdoses and substance abuse are at record levels. I fought hard to make sure this package will allow seniors to get Medicare coverage for counseling, funding to train new psychiatrists, create new mental health mobile crisis units, and instruct Medicare to cover intensive outpatient mental health care.

We are also going to attack the opioid crisis head-on by expanding options for medication-assisted treatment while also making never-before-seen investments in suicide prevention, maternal mental health, pediatric mental health, and so much more.

We will also keep making healthcare more accessible than it was in years past. We will ensure Medicare beneficiaries can keep using telehealth through 2024. That is huge, particularly in rural areas.

We will invest new resources to hire and train more doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers, who have been in high demand over the past couple of years.

We are also increasing support for rural and low-income hospitals that very often have to get by with precious little help.

So on the healthcare front, the omnibus is an aggressive, generous, and far-reaching package, and I salute all those, including Chairman MURRAY and Chairman LEAHY, for their work on this.

On the manufacturing and science front, the omnibus secures the first major downpayment in building the tech hubs across the country that we have authorized through the CHIPS and Science Act. This means real dollars to create the silicon valleys, the silicon forests, the silicon heartlands and prairies of tomorrow. Again, I want to thank Chair CANTWELL for her steadfast leadership on this issue, as well as my colleague on the other side of the aisle, TODD YOUNG.

Under the omnibus, we will also secure the largest increase for the National Science Foundation of all time, including a surge in funds for the new Technology Directorate and for STEM workforce training that will spur chip growth across the country and give training to millions who have been left out of the increase in jobs in tech.

Also included are billions to support universities, national labs, manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and workers with the support necessary for the United States to beat back China and remain technologically competitive on the world stage.

That is not all. There is much more to celebrate in this package. We will keep our promise to our veterans by fully funding provisions of the PACT Act so veterans suffering from burn pit exposure can get the care they deserve. We will help veterans with their mental health needs, reform VA long-term care services, and support veterans who struggle with homelessness.

We say to our veterans: You have been there when we needed you; this omnibus is there when you need us.

For students, we have secured the largest increase in Pell grants in over a decade—an increase of \$500; the maximum Pell Grant will now be \$7,395, providing ladders-up for millions of kids who come from poor and working families. That is a great thing.

For the first time in history, we will also bring Indian Health Services into parity with all other healthcare providers. This historic provision helps fulfill the Federal Government's trust responsibility to our tribes. We will provide more resources, healthcare coverage, and the dignity they deserve.

We have secured billions for more childcare access, billions for homeless assistance grants, billions for Rural Housing Services, over a billion for HOME Investment Partnership Programs, and over a billion for the Housing for the Elderly and Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program. So from start to finish and from top to bottom, this omnibus is bold, generous, far-reaching, and ambitious.

It is not everything we would have wanted, of course. When you are dealing in a bipartisan, bicameral way, you have to sit down and get it done and that means each side has to concede some things; but it is something that we can be very proud of—all of us.

Now we must get this done before Friday—well before that, if possible.

I want to thank every single colleague and staff Member who worked relentlessly to put this piece together; not only Senators LEAHY and SHELBY but their subcommittee chairs and ranking members. It was a herculean feat for our dedicated appropriators. The process may have been difficult, but I am confident we are now in a position to pass this bill quickly. And I am even more confident that once we finish our work on this package, America will be a healthier, more prosperous, and more secure country thanks to the work we have done here and now.

Thanks to my colleagues. Let's finish the bill very soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

OMNIBUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, President Biden's proposal for fiscal 2023 was a massive real-dollar increase for liberal domestic spending and a significant real-dollar cut for our national defense. Thanks to the tireless work from Senator SHELBY and a number of